

## Fessler elected to American Society for Clinical Investigation

By Eddy Ball

NIEHS lead researcher Michael Fessler, M.D., joined an elite group of physician-scientists when he was elected to the American Society for Clinical Investigation (ASCI). Fessler was introduced as a new member April 24 at the joint meeting of ASCI and the Association of American Physicians in Chicago.

Each spring, [ASCI](http://www.the-asci.org/about.shtml)

([https://www.the-asci.org/about.shtml](http://www.the-asci.org/about.shtml))

welcomes up to 80 new early-career physicians to its membership, which now numbers more than 3,000. The society elects physicians, from all medical specialties, who have demonstrated outstanding records of scholarly achievement in biomedical research.

ASCI bylaws stipulate that to be considered for membership, "[A prospective member must be a] physician who is 50 years of age or less [and] has accomplished meritorious original, creative, and independent investigations in the clinical or allied sciences of medicine and enjoys an unimpeachable moral standing in the medical profession."

When [Fessler](#) was awarded tenure in 2013, NIEHS Scientific Director and fellow member of ASCI Darryl Zeldin, M.D., described his colleague's commitment to research. "He's a great example of a translational investigator who learns about diseases at the bedside, goes back to the lab and tries to understand basic mechanisms using cell systems and animal models, and then takes what he learns in the lab back to humans, to develop novel approaches to treat or prevent disease."

### Merging basic and clinical research

Fessler is a respiratory biologist and critical care physician who serves as deputy chief of the NIEHS Immunity, Inflammation, and Disease Laboratory and heads the Clinical Investigation of Host Defense Group. His team investigates the role of cholesterol in immunity, and uses advanced laboratory analysis and translational approaches to discover and validate novel insights into the innate, or immediate, immune response.

Along with his basic research, Fessler holds a secondary appointment in the NIEHS [Clinical Research Branch](#). Using human specimens from the NIEHS Clinical Research Unit, Fessler's group translates hypotheses and experimental observations into practical applications for human disease.

Even at this early stage in his career, Fessler has published more than 60 studies in leading peer-reviewed journals, including the Journal of Experimental Medicine, Cell Metabolism, and the Journal of Biological Chemistry.

Fessler received an A.B. from Princeton University in 1992, and an M.D. from Harvard Medical School in 1996. He trained in internal medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital and pulmonary and critical care medicine at the University of Colorado, before joining NIEHS in 2006 as a physician-scientist specializing in immunology.

Election to ASCI is the latest of several awards Fessler has received, which include the NIEHS Early Career Award, NIEHS Intramural Research Award, and the American Thoracic Society Carol Basbaum Award. He serves on the editorial board of the journal PLOS ONE and is a member of the [Faculty of 1000](#).

(<http://f1000.com/>)

(Eddy Ball is a contract writer with the NIEHS Office of Communications and Public Liaison.)



*"I am honored, but also greatly humbled, to join the ranks of the ASCI," said Fessler, center, shown with members Perry Blackshear, M.D., D.Phil, head of the NIEHS Post-Transcriptional Gene Expression Group, and NIEHS Scientific Director Darryl Zeldin, M.D. (Photo courtesy of Anne Fessler)*

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